

Convert to All Sustainable Coffee and Tea in Kaiser Permanente's Northern California Region

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Increase demand for coffee and tea that is grown in a manner that reduces the pesticide, herbicide, and water burden on indigenous agricultural communities. Increase viability of food systems through support of sustainable and ethical practices.

Business Impact: Sustainable coffee and tea products result in an estimated costs savings of 5-14%, depending on end user product choices.

Challenge

The agriculture supply chain of conventionally-grown coffee and tea does not require equitable pricing structures for farmers, nor does it support sustainable farming practices. In addition, pesticides and herbicides used in conventional production of coffee and tea have been shown to cause severe adverse health effects among farmer workers and their families¹. Kaiser Permanente has a long standing commitment to improving the health of our members, employees, communities and the environment by increasing access to healthy food in and around KP facilities. Converting our coffee and tea in Northern California (NCAL) products to 100 percent sustainable is an excellent opportunity to support these goals.

Aim/Goal

Source sustainable coffee and tea for NCAL Kaiser Permanente break room needs that meet the following certifications: Organic, Fair Trade, Bird-Friendly, and the Rainforest Alliance.

Team

Kathleen Reed –Sustainable Food Program Manager, National Nutrition Services, Procurement & Supply
Robin Salmon – MedAssets Negotiator
Danilo Sim – Sourcing Manager, Procurement & Supply
Daryl Gerstenberger – Sourcing Specialist, Procurement & Supply

Actions Taken

- ✓ Investigated incumbent supplier's existing product offerings that met Kaiser Permanente's sustainable food criteria and our current spend on sustainable.
- ✓ Worked with incumbent to identify product areas where a conversion to sustainable was still necessary and feasible.
- ✓ Ensured a regional standard was established and communicated to supplier: only coffee and tea products meeting Kaiser Permanente sustainability criteria are to be made available to NCAL break rooms.

Results

Maintained strong relationship with incumbent supplier (Associated Services) while improving coffee and tea offerings to meet sustainable food goals:



Lessons Learned

- ✓ Availability of sustainable coffee and tea products is continually increasing and broadening.
- ✓ Valuable to partner with a supplier experienced in transitioning clients to sustainable products, as well as end-user marketing.

Next Steps

- ✓ Continue to phase out non-sustainable food products within NCAL and nationally.
- ✓ Continue to research market for improved sustainability practices and products, as well as best pricing.
- ✓ Maintain success through ongoing monitoring of purchasing practices.

¹ Bacon, C (2008). *Confronting the Coffee Crisis: Fair Trade, Sustainable Livelihoods and Ecosystems in Mexico and Central America* (V. Mendez, S. Gliessman, D. Goodman, J. Fox) .The MIT Press.